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Special Libraries Association

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information outlook

THE MAGAZINE OF THE SPECIAL LIBRARIES ASSOCIATION

SOCIAL NETWORKING

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FOCUS: SOCIAL NETWORKING

information outlook

The Magazine of the Special Libraries Association
Vol. 14, No. 03
April/May 2010

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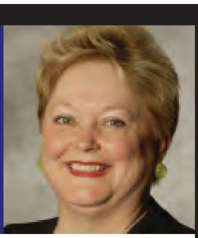
Living in a Small-Town Network

Social networking takes us back to our communities of old, where we built relationships and forged bonds that served as foundations for our professional and personal lives.



BY ANNE CAPUTO, SLA PRESIDENT

Do you remember the first time you saw a Facebook entry? Sent a tweet? Shared photos on Flikr? Watched a movie on Flixster? Found a schoolmate on Classmates.com?

If you do, you joined the networked world as an adult. Millions of us are in this shared space, learning to use these and other social networking tools as upgrades to, or replacements for, earlier and more primitive means of social communication. If you are part of the even larger group who cannot remember communicating without these tools, you are a digital native, someone who sees these applications as virtual extensions of your eyes, ears and mouth.

I stand firmly in the former camp but communicate daily with those in the latter. I am a baby boomer who is sometimes bewildered by the existence of these tools and unsure why anyone needs them. My 24-year old son is firmly in the millennial camp and cannot imagine communicating without them. Makes for interesting dinner conversation, to say the least.

Speaking as a boomer who is a parent of a millennial, here are some observations I would make to help bridge the generation gap:

Networks as social communities. I think of Facebook and its multiple spawn as venues for returning to our small-town roots in a way that offers the closeness and comfort of a community where, like the bar in the TV show *Cheers*, "everybody knows your name." I can know instantly whether someone is celebrating a new puppy, working on a special project, lying in the sun, leaving to go on vacation, or baking bread. That person is separated from me only by the screen we use to display our thoughts.

The big difference is that, with networks, we are living in a community of our own choosing or creation instead of a community formed by geographic coincidence. We can share our passions and interests while erasing geographic and cultural boundaries.

Social networking tools build a level of closeness and allow a degree of sharing that are not attainable in most physical communities. We need to cherish the opportunity to participate in these networks and not abuse their trust. Boomers sometimes fear the public nature of these communities and prefer to be observers rather than join in the fun and share. Likewise, some people overwhelm their communities with all of the details of their day. They don't seem to understand that not everything they do or think is fascinating to the rest of us.

Networks as news sources. We can use social networks to share breaking news faster than more traditional mechanisms. This makes for exciting and sometimes embarrassing circumstances. Take the recent case of Peter Teague, a Georgetown University Law Center professor, who announced to a class of first-year students that Supreme Court Chief Justice John Roberts would soon be stepping down for health-related reasons. The news blasted around Washington and spanned the globe before Professor Teague announced mid-class that it was not true and that he was teaching a lesson about the dangers of unsubstantiated reporting.

The ability to share news carries with it a responsibility to share accurate news, news we know to be true. Once inaccurate information reaches virtual networks, it can't be taken back, a lesson millennials sometimes learn to their dismay when they post evidence of youthful indiscretions. Make sure the news you post can withstand the scrutiny of your professional networks as well as your personal ones.

Networks as advocacy tools. Networks offer opportunities for advocacy, as evidenced by President Obama's very successful use of social networks to raise campaign funds. In February 2008, John McCain raised $11 million using conventional fund-raising methods, while Barak Obama raised $55 million during the same period without making a single fund-raising appearance. In the recent debate within SLA about whether to adopt a new name for our association, the tides of opinion for and against the proposal rose to record heights.

Social networks are maturing in ways that make them interesting and useful to knowledge professionals and researchers.

Networking tools offer ways to create and mobilize groups who share common views. This is a powerful use of social networks, and one we can anticipate will grow in influence. But think before you join an advocacy group—does it really reflect your views? Sometimes group names can be misleading. Be sure you fully agree before you join.

Social networks are maturing in ways that make them interesting and useful to knowledge professionals and researchers. They offer early insights into trends, breaking news, instant polling, and popular culture in ways that make business researchers, media pollsters and others drool. More and more content aggregators are looking at social network content in the same way they previously looked at blogs.

How do we lead our organizations into making use of these new tools? How do we help determine what is accurate and what is not? How do we participate in ways that are professional and useful?

As your professional association, SLA is leading the way in evaluating social networking tools and determining how information professionals can best use them for their libraries and organizations. Our annual conference will feature sessions on Twitter and other social networks, and this issue of *Information Outlook* contains articles on this topic. Beyond that, dive into our Innovation Lab and the 23 Things toolset, which offer hands-on opportunities to learn more. Happy networking! **SLA**

2010 RISING STARS · SLA RESEARCH GRANT

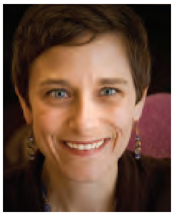
Five Early-Career Librarians Named SLA Rising Stars

A coordinator of digital publishing initiatives, a content development officer for education communities, and a patent application researcher are among the five early-career professionals from three countries named to receive the 2010 SLA Rising Star Award, given by the Special Libraries Association (SLA) and sponsor J. J. Keller & Associates.

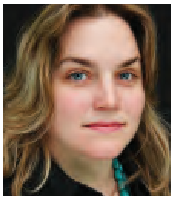
Jessica Warner Beauchamp, Amy Buckland, Reece Dano, Bethan Ruddock, and Chris Vestal will be honored during the Awards Ceremony and Opening General Session at the SLA 2010 Annual Conference & INFO-EXPO, to be held June 13-16 in New Orleans. At the conference, they will also participate in the SLA Rising Stars–SLA Fellows Roundtable, the first event of its kind, on Monday, June 14.

Now in its second year, the Rising Star Award is presented to SLA members who show exceptional promise of leadership and contribution to the association and the profession. Only information professionals who are in their first five years of SLA membership and have one to five years of experience are eligible to receive the Rising Star Award.

The 2010 SLA Rising Star Award recipients have followed a variety of career paths. **Jessica Warner Beauchamp** moved into information management as a second career following 15 years in the communications field. She consults as a project manager for the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., where she manages and supports more than a dozen teams dedicated to implementing the Smithsonian's Digitization Strategic Plan. An active SLA member since 2005, Beauchamp currently serves as co-chair of the Washington, D.C., Chapter's Community Outreach Committee; she previously served as its ethics ambassador, second vice president, and chair of its Strategic Planning Committee.



Amy Buckland is the e-scholarship, e-publishing and digitization coordinator at McGill University Library in Montreal, where she coordinates digital publishing initiatives, digitization projects, and the institutional repository. She has been an active member of SLA since 2006 and currently serves as the communications and social media chair for the SLA Academic Division and the SLA Information Technology (IT) Division.



Prior to assuming her current position, she worked as a liaison librarian in the Howard Ross Library of Management, also at McGill. Her research interests include the transformation of scholarly communication, virtual research environments, and the use of emerging technologies to build communities. She is the publisher of *Library Student Journal*, an international, open access, peer-reviewed journal, and the author of a blog (http://informingthoughts.com). In 2008, she was named a "Mover & Shaker" by *Library Journal*.

Reece Dano is an information specialist at Ziba Design, an interdisciplinary design and branding firm in Portland, Oregon. He has been a member of SLA since 2007 and is currently the alignment ambassador for the Division of Advertising and Marketing. Dano also serves as the membership director for the Oregon Chapter of SLA, working to promote ties with students who may be unaware of the wide variety of career paths available to them.

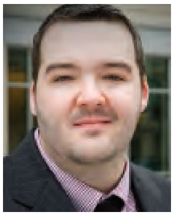
At Ziba, Dano built an embedded librarianship model through which he provides strategic support for multiple design and branding projects, working with team members throughout the design process. He also supports Ziba's business development and marketing initiatives and recently has made Web-based ethnographic studies of consumer-generated data a core competency for the company's Consumer Insights and Trends Group. Prior to accepting his current position, Dano worked in technical services positions at the libraries of Boston University, Johns Hopkins University and Reed College.

Bethan Ruddock is a content development officer at Mimas, a center of excellence based at the University of Manchester in England that provides services to education and research communities in the United Kingdom. She works with the library and archival services team at Mimas to investigate and implement sustainable content development initiatives.

Ruddock joined SLA in 2009 and was awarded one of four SLA Europe Early Career Conference Awards to attend the SLA 2009 Annual Conference. Since then, she has been active in the SLA Europe Chapter, serving as co-chair of the Early Career Committee.

Her interest in supporting fellow new professionals has led Ruddock to develop a number of resources for the library and information community, including a mailing list to collate and share information about awards and sponsorships open to information professionals and students.

Chris Vestal works for ASRC Management Services in Washington, D.C., supporting its contract with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. He supervises a team of four researchers and assists patent examiners researching subjects related to patent applications in the fields of computer architecture, software, and cryptographic technologies. He also creates and delivers technology-specific training for patent examiners on topics such



as searching relevant databases and using the latest Web-based information resources.

Vestal Joined SLA in 2006 and is currently co-convener for the SLA Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual and Transgender Issues Caucus, editor-in-chief of the DC/SLA newsletter, an alignment ambassador, and a member of the SLA Public Relations Advisory Council.

Grant to Fund Study of Competitive Intelligence

How and to what extent do workers performing competitive intelligence (CI) activities use their corporate libraries? How do they value their corporate libraries and the information professionals with whom they work? And how do those information professionals view their role in the CI process?

With financial support from SLA, Tao Jin, an assistant professor in the School of Library and Information Science at Louisiana State University, will answer those questions. His proposed research project, "Understanding the Value of Corporate Libraries in Competitive Intelligence Practices," was selected from a number of submissions by the SLA Research and Development Committee to receive the 2009 SLA Research Grant.

Using an approach that combines quantitative and qualitative research methodologies, Jin will survey both CI practitioners and information professionals and conduct four case studies at four different organizations. Jin has studied the CI community for more than six years and has published numerous articles and conference papers about competitive intelligence, knowledge management, and Webometrics.

According to the 2009 SLA Annual Salary Survey, information professionals in the United States who identified competitive intelligence as their primary job responsibility earned a median salary of $72,000, compared to $68,000 for all survey respondents. Of the librarians working in CI, those who reported they had been with the same employer for 11-15 years earned as much as $169,500 annually. **SLA**

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Readers Visiting Google and Yahoo for News Content, Bypassing Newspaper Sites

Nearly 60 percent of news consumers prefer to access it online rather than in print, and content aggregators such as Google and Yahoo are their favorite sources for such news, according to a survey by Outsell.

The poll of nearly 2,800 U.S. news consumers, including many "power news users" who consult news sources at least twice a day, found that 57 percent prefer digital versions, up from 33 percent a few years ago. They also are likelier to turn to an aggregator of news content (31 percent) than a newspaper site (8 percent) or other site (18 percent), though newspapers still retain strength with local topics, such as family events and entertainment.

Based on the survey findings, Outsell predicts that print circulation of U.S. newspapers will continue to fall as consumers gravitate more and more toward the Internet. The firm forecasts 3.5 percent annual declines in both daily and Sunday circulation, leading to a low of 43 million Sunday newspaper readers by 2012, compared to more than 62 million in the early 1990s.

Although some newspaper executives hope they can offset circulation declines by charging for online content, the survey suggests they are likely to be disappointed. Only 10 percent of news users say they are willing to pay to gain online access, while 75 percent say they would turn to a different source for local news if their newspapers charged a fee for online access.

The survey findings highlight the impact that content aggregators have had on both print and online readership. "Though Google is driving some traffic to newspapers, it's also taking a significant share away," concludes Outsell analyst Ken Doctor. "A full 44 percent of visitors to Google News scan headlines without accessing newspapers' individual sites."

Touchscreens Will Flood Consumer Market, But Trickle into Workplaces

More than half of personal computers purchased for users under the age of 15 will have touch-enabled screens by 2015, but fewer than 10 percent of PCs sold to businesses and other work organizations will have them, according to research by Gartner, Inc.

Gartner's report, "If Touch Works Everywhere Else, Why Not on PCs?" notes that although touch and pen input are not new to the PC industry—both have been available for more than 20 years—touch-enabled devices will be slow to penetrate most workplaces due to heavy requirements for typing and text input. The report authors predict that the "muscle memory" of mouse users and the potential problems of moving a user's hands from the keyboard to the mouse will create particular adoption barriers for knowledge workers, so consumers and schools will be the earliest adopters of touch-enabled PCs and notebooks.

The earliest adopters of touch-enabled devices will be people looking for entertainment and casual gaming applications, the report forecasts, while the next wave of adopters will be consumers of media content (movies, newspapers and e-books). If touch-enabled devices succeed with these users, it will create greater demand for touch in other PC applications.

As prices drop, education will become a major market for touch- and pen-enabled devices, the report states. Children just entering school find direct manipulation on the screen a natural way to interact with their computers, while older students are already using pen input to annotate class material or capture formulae and graphics that can't be recorded with keyboards. Because most school districts do not want to support two separate devices (one for touch and another for pen), most districts are looking for dual-input screens that support both touch and pen in a single device.

"Consensus among Gartner client U.S. school districts is that over half, and possibly as many as 75 percent, will be specifying touch and/or pen input within the next five years," says Leslie Fiering, research vice president at Gartner. "Consider this as the precursor to a major upcoming generational shift in how users relate to their computing devices."

Touchscreens are already being used in many customer-facing situations like information kiosks and automated teller machines (ATMs); Gartner predicts that restaurants, retail establishments and health care providers will be among the next adopters. Over time, as more touch-based graphics applications become available, the screens will become more common in the workplace.

Gartner expects progress in this area to be evolutionary rather than revolutionary. No single "killer application" will change the market overnight; rather, there will be an incremental introduction of user interfaces, drops in hardware prices and increases in touch-enhanced software.

"As with many recent technology advances, touch adoption will be led by consumers and only gradually get accepted by the enterprise," Ms. Fiering says. "What will be different here is the expected widespread adoption of touchscreens by education, so that an entire generation will graduate within the next 10 to 15 years for whom touch input is totally natural."

Greater Access to Public Data to Generate 'Government Revolution'

Advances in social media and information technology are making more "raw" government transaction data available to the public, leading to greater collaboration between government and the community, according to a report by Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu (DTT).

According to the report, "Unlocking Government: How Data Transforms Democracy," many public agencies are now embracing the idea that information such as government officials' expenses, patent information, crime statistics, and health inspection findings should be broadly and easily available in a "reusable" format to all citizens. Governments that previously focused on improving public reporting of financial information for more transparency and accountability have now expanded their mandate to the release of raw transaction data, representing a fundamentally new form of openness.

"The old adage that information is power is even truer today," says Greg Pellegrino, global public sector industry leader at DTT. "Greater access to information leads to stronger decisions, greater and lasting change, and more effective solutions."

Among the early success stories described in the report are the following:

- When members of a California city government decided they couldn't wait the 12-24 months it would take to hold community forums and elections to help solve their budget crisis, they developed a community feedback portal to implement a more immediate solution.
- In England and Wales, police departments are using mapping technologies that combine geographic and census data with land information and incidence reports to track and understand neighborhood crime trends. This information is available to the public through their Web sites.
- Denmark has created a National Health Portal that gives individuals and health care professionals a one-stop-shop for health-related information and services. Citizens can use this site to access medical reports, check prescriptions and make appointments.

The report also explores how governments are evolving from data publishers to platform developers, making information more open, innovative, responsive and smarter. In the end, the report concludes, citizens will see greater public value in the form of better services, more benefits, and more effective policies.

To read the full study, visit www.deloitte.com/opengov.

Online Cooperation Can Improve Businesses and Governments

Innovative forms of online cooperation could result in more efficient and responsive for-profit businesses, nonprofit organizations, and government agencies by the year 2020, according to technology experts and Internet advocates and critics.

The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project and Elon University's Imagining the Internet Center surveyed roughly 900 Internet stakeholders and found that more than seven in 10 agreed with this statement: "By 2020, innovative forms of online cooperation will result in significantly more efficient and responsive governments, business, nonprofits, and other mainstream institutions."

In written comments, however, respondents cited concerns that bureaucracies of all stripes, especially government agencies, can and will resist outside encouragement to evolve. Some wrote that the level of change will affect different kinds of institutions at different times. The consensus among them was that businesses will transform themselves much more quickly than public and nonprofit agencies.

Roughly one-quarter of respondents were pessimistic about the ability of institutions to change, agreeing instead with this statement: "By 2020, governments, businesses, nonprofits and other mainstream institutions will primarily retain familiar 20th century models for conduct of relationships with citizens and consumers online and offline."

For more information, visit www.pewinternet.org and read "The Impact of the Internet on Institutions in the Future."

Libraries Hope Marketing Will Forestall Budget Cuts

Libraries at U.S. colleges and universities are taking steps to highlight the depth and breadth of their collections in an effort to attract more students and faculty and thus make a strong case for preserving funding, according to a recent survey by ProQuest.

The survey of 63 librarians found that more than 75 percent expect budget cuts of anywhere from 5 to 20 percent during their next budget year. In preparation, more than four in five say they are becoming more aggressive in their marketing and outreach efforts and especially in improving awareness of their collections. The emphasis on collections is underscored by two other survey findings: 86 percent of respondents said that faculty and students do not understand the breadth of their collections, while 94 percent feel the collections are not explored fully.

"Simple but powerful discovery is an absolutely critical issue for libraries in reaching and securing customers," says Lynda James-Gilboe, senior vice president of marketing and customer care at ProQuest. "There's effort under way among many of our vendor colleagues to address this issue."

Respondents to the survey also cited the need for greater library awareness through marketing that focuses on community building, akin to public library strategies. Respondents listed several tactics they had tried or were considering, including "game nights" for students, summer reading programs for the children of faculty members, free printing, and contests that highlight students' imagination and build their investment in the library.

To learn more about the survey results, visit proquest.com. **SLA**

Social Media: The Value for Librarians

SOCIAL NETWORKING TOOLS CAN HELP INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS TAP THE POWER OF SLA'S MEMBER NETWORK AND LEARN FROM PEERS ACROSS THE GLOBE.

BY DENNIE HEYE

Information professionals have always been pioneers in using technology to collect, manage and disseminate information. Just think about the online catalog or online databases, where information professionals were pushing the envelope of what was available to support our mission.

Social media (the term "Web 2.0" is also used) are new additions to our tool set. Definitions vary, but they're primarily Internet-based tools for sharing ideas and information. The information can take the form of words, pictures, video, audio, or any combination of these.

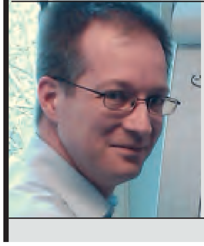
A recent study (Rogers 2009) showed that more than 90 percent of surveyed librarians felt that social media were important for marketing libraries and their services. One respondent even stated, "Important doesn't really do it justice. Any library that is not using Web 2.0 technology is not only hurting itself, but it is also hurting the future of all libraries."

I recently came across two examples that illustrate how social media can be used by information professionals in different ways. First example: One of the key services of the information center at the Ministry of Education in the Netherlands is providing managers with an overview of how students, teachers and the general public react to new policies. In the past, staff members would clip items from newspapers and magazines and make prints from Web sites. Now the information center monitors tools like Facebook, Twitter and blogs to provide almost-real-time updates, and managers have the opportunity to participate in certain discussions online to state facts or discuss arguments.

Second example: My own organization launched wikis to capture knowledge and information. Several wiki pages were created every day, so structuring and finding information became a challenge. The information center addressed this problem by creating a service whereby staff members review new wiki pages twice a week to add categories and links and check acronyms and summaries if needed.

For me, the question is not *whether* you should use social media as an information professional, but *which ones* and *how*. You may feel overwhelmed at first, but the wide range of social media available means there is very likely something that fits your needs.

SLA itself uses social media to support its mission. The power of SLA lies in its wide network of members across the globe. These members are will-



DENNIE HEYE is a global knowledge manager at a global energy company. He can be reached by e-mail at dennie@heye.nl or on Twitter at @obnoxiouslibrn.

ing to help each other and share their experiences. SLA facilitates that network through its Web site, blogs, wikis, Twitter and other media.

At the upcoming SLA conference in New Orleans, there will be several workshops and lectures about social media. Grab the opportunity to attend one or more of them, not only to learn from the speakers but also to meet with peers to discuss issues and opportunities. If you cannot attend the conference, SLA offers Webinars about the use of social media as well.

This issue of *Information Outlook* features three different perspectives on how librarians can use social networking tools to their advantage. One article presents a case study of a library school that has experimented with several social media to promote the school and its programs. A second article describes how information professionals can use social media to counteract the "wisdom of crowds" created by social media in the first place. The third article discusses the importance of social listening and explains how to set up "listening posts" that can help you develop an overall social networking strategy.

Reap the ideas from these articles, then share your experiences and thoughts with me or another member of the *Information Outlook* Advisory Council! **SLA**

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Marketing LIS Courses with Web 2.0 Tools

BY USING SOCIAL NETWORKING TOOLS TO ATTRACT PROSPECTIVE STUDENTS, AN LIS SCHOOL LEARNED SOME IMPORTANT LESSONS ABOUT THE SKILLS AND COMMITMENT NEEDED TO MAKE THEIR EFFORTS SUCCESSFUL.

BY MARTIN DE SAULLES, DPHIL

At the University of Brighton, we've been offering library and information studies (LIS) courses in various forms since 1947. Like most other U.K.-based library schools, we now teach only postgraduate courses, having dropped our undergraduate offerings several years ago. We have an information studies program for graduates wanting their first professional qualification and an information management program for experienced information professionals wishing to extend and update their skills.

The market for LIS courses in the United Kingdom is a tough one, as several universities have dropped their programs in recent years. Being one of the smaller LIS teaching departments still operating has created a challenge for us: how to make our voice heard by potential students in a sector with larger and higher-profile competitors.

In 2007, we decided to try raising awareness of our courses using some Web 2.0 services. There were three key reasons we adopted this strategy.

First, our marketing budget was very small, and placing one advertisement in the magazine of our professional body, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), used up most of it. Many Web 2.0 tools are free or very cheap to use, which makes them attractive in such a situation.

Second, we wanted to reach out to a broader audience than our traditional library market. While we realize that students wanting to start careers in public, academic, school and corporate libraries are a core part of our market, we are aware that the profession is changing. New roles for information professionals are being created, requiring additional skill sets around the areas of content management, Web development and end-user training. Our hope was that using new communication tools would extend our reach to people who might not be aware of the relevance of our courses to their career development.

Finally, as academics, we were keen to test some of the claims being made for Web 2.0 tools as platforms for communication and marketing. What better way than to test them for our own ends?

MARTIN DE SAULLES is head of the Division of Information Management at the University of Brighton in England. He teaches and carries out research in the areas of knowledge management and innovations in the information industry. He can be reached at mrd@brighton.ac.uk.

Making a Start

Our first foray into the world of Web 2.0 was the creation of a blog. In 2007, we were hardly blogosphere pioneers, as a number of other LIS departments in the

United Kingdom and United States had already launched blogs. However, these tended to be hidden away in subdirectories of their departmental Web sites, looked rather drab, and were difficult to find. Some of them also suffered from the classic blog curse—a paucity of updates. A blog that has not been updated in several months can do more damage to your marketing efforts than no blog at all.

Consequently, we considered four main factors when developing our blogging strategy:

- The blog needed to be easy to find and have its own domain name;
- It should be under our control and not subject to the demands of our university's Web architecture and policies;
- It should have a distinctive style and appearance; and
- It should be updated regularly, with posts about our department, courses, staff and students.

As the person driving our overall Web 2.0 strategy, I considered various names for the blog before settling on "Information Matters." The phrase encapsulates our philosophy, offers a concise play on words, and, more importantly, was available as a domain name. Although the .com variant was already taken, the .net and .org options were still available.

Choosing a blogging platform was also relatively straightforward. I had a Web hosting account that allowed me to easily set up open source applications, including WordPress, one of the world's leading blogging systems. WordPress offers a robust platform, with thousands of third-party templates from which to choose. (The decision to host the blog on my personal account came back to haunt me a couple of years later, but I'll come to that in a bit.)

So, within a few days, we had procured a domain name, a blogging platform and a design. A quick e-mail to a graphic designer (who just happens to be my brother) gave us a logo. The total cost—setting aside the hosting service, for which I had already paid—was $30 for the two domain names. Even by the standards of our constrained marketing budget, this was a bargain. All that remained was to start blogging. How hard could that be?

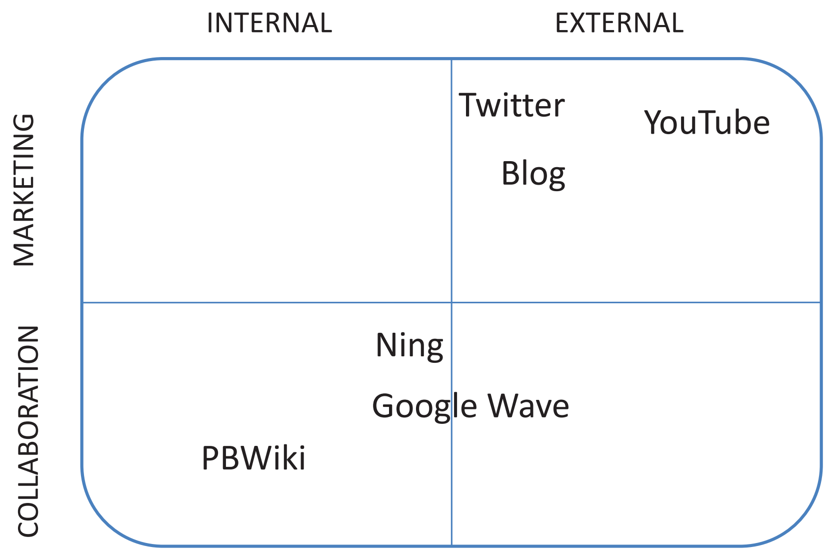

Figure 1: Uses and Audiences for Brighton University Social Networking Tools

Keeping the blog up to date was actually harder than we thought, and the last couple of years have seen mixed results in terms of the blog's effectiveness as a marketing tool. The main problem has been getting people to contribute. I think there are several reasons for this.

First, some of us don't feel comfortable describing our professional activities to an unknown audience, namely the billion-plus people surfing the Web. Second, blogging is not an established part of our workflow. As academics, we prepare lectures, teach, perform administrative duties, and write research papers, but writing blog posts does not seem to fit naturally into our daily activities. Finally, my colleagues who don't read blogs are not very aware of the power of this medium to reach people and communicate messages.

Despite these challenges, I firmly believe blogging has been, and still is, a worthwhile exercise. One of the great things about blogging from a marketing perspective is that you can see how many people are reading your posts, where they're coming from, and what search terms they used to find you. We don't generate huge amounts of traffic, but a number of applicants over the past two years have said they found us through our blog.

I mentioned earlier that self-hosting the blog became an issue. In 2009, our blog, like many other WordPress blogs, was attacked by hackers, and malicious code was inserted across the site. The code distributed viruses to unsuspecting visitors and resulted in us being blacklisted by Google. After spending many hours trying to clean the site, I decided to let WordPress host it, which is far safer and something I'd recommend to anyone who, like me, is not an expert in managing such things.

Moving into Video

In 2008, with the blog up and running (well, jogging), we thought we were ready for YouTube. We had always produced brochures to promote our courses, but while a brochure is useful for distributing at open house functions and sending to individual inquirers, it is too expensive to send to potential applicants through a mass mailing.

Creating a YouTube channel to promote our courses and department seemed like a logical progression, so I bought a camera, learned how to edit video, and started filming. A word of caution is appropriate here: While anyone can point a video camera at a person and record what the person says, producing a video of sufficient quality to entice people to buy what you're selling is another matter. We could not afford to pay a professional to produce our videos, so we had to produce it ourselves, and while I've learned a lot in the past couple of years, I'm still in the early stages of becoming competent at video production (visit our YouTube channel to see for yourself).

To anyone thinking of doing something similar, I would recommend taking the following steps:

First, buy a decent video camera that can operate in low-light conditions. I opted for a 3CCD Panasonic camera, which uses mini-DV tape and costs less than $500. While it was not the most technologically advanced camera on the market when I bought it, it offered sharp pictures in a format that could be edited easily. Beware of some of the cheaper HD cameras on the market that output video in formats that are not well-suited to most editing software.

Make sure your video camera has a socket for an external microphone. The internal microphones in most cameras will pick up all sorts of sounds from the camera and filming environment, resulting in an "amateurish" final output. If you are interviewing people and have an external microphone socket, you can use lapel microphones, which only cost around $30 but dramatically improve sound quality.

Try to keep your videos short and sharp. Having a single interviewee talk for more than a minute or so is a mistake. YouTube only allows you to upload videos that are shorter than 10 minutes, and even that is probably too long for a promotional video. I've managed to cut our latest promotional video down from nine to six minutes, but I'd like to keep the next version to four minutes or even less.

Since 2008, we've posted half a dozen videos on our YouTube channel, and some of them have been viewed more than a thousand times. I can think of two students who said our main promotional video, which is embedded on our blog and the university's Web site, influenced their decision to choose Brighton as their place of study.

Trying Other Social Media

While our blog and YouTube channel have been our main investments in social media, we have also tried several other Web 2.0 services. We've done so not just to promote our courses but also to improve communication, both among staff and between staff and students.

Figure 1 shows how these experiments map to our efforts to improve our marketing and collaboration, both internally and externally. While our blog and YouTube channel are aimed at marketing our courses to potential students, the other media—Twitter, Ning, Google Wave and our wiki—are more internally focused and, in the case of all but Twitter, are about sharing information between staff and students.

So, how successful have they been, and what have we learned thus far?

Twitter. This was a short-lived experiment that did not take off, mainly due to staff lacking time to contribute. I've always been a little skeptical of the utility of Twitter as a marketing tool, unless you are able to build up a sizeable following and have specific offers to broadcast, such as money-off vouchers (which is clearly not the case with us).

Ning. Ning allows you to create your own online community, closed or open, and functions in a manner similar to Facebook and MySpace. In October 2009 we created a Ning community for staff, students and interested external people to communicate and share information. The community is still at an early stage; we will be inviting more of our students to join it later this academic year.

So far, I am quite impressed with how easy Ning is to use and the way members can set up sub-groups for specific courses or areas of interest. However, we will have to wait and see whether it takes off in a sustainable way. Like all online communities, Ning requires members to invest time in writing posts and sharing information.

PBWorks wiki. Using a wiki as a secure, internal repository for documents and information relating to projects is a great idea. We have been using a PBWorks wiki for this purpose for more than a year, and while it is not being used by everyone in our division, it is a useful central place to share documents. I particularly like it as a place to store photographs of white boards from project meetings.

Google Wave. Although this is still in beta form and not widely used, I managed to obtain an invitation from Google a few months ago. Like many people who have used Google Wave, I am still not quite sure how, if at all, it might integrate into our workflow.

Google has been positioning Wave as "how e-mail would look if it were invented today." The problem is that e-mail is embedded into our work and personal lives and, whatever the merits of Google Wave, will not be replaced easily. If any readers are interested, I have a few invitations to give out for Google Wave, so feel free to contact me for one.

Try Them Out

As you can see, we've had mixed results with Web 2.0 services. Our blog and YouTube channel have been successful in promoting our courses and attracting new students, but other tools, Twitter in particular, have not worked so well. The glaring omission from the list is Facebook, the social media giant. Facebook is something I will look at later this year, but my experience using it outside of work has been that personal contacts have blurred with professional ones, resulting in an uncomfortable mix.

To sum up what I've learned from our foray into Web 2.0 and social media, I would say this: Until you try them out, you'll never know what works for you. When you try them, however, don't underestimate the effort needed to get them off the ground and, more importantly, to sustain them. **SLA**

Links

Our blog- www.informationmatters.net
Our YouTube Channel -
www.youtube.com/user/infostudies
Our Ning Community -
http://informationmatters.ning.com/

Listening: The Fast Track to Social Networking

LISTENING TO WHAT CUSTOMERS, COMPETITORS AND EXPERTS ARE SAYING CAN BE A MUCH MORE PRODUCTIVE SOCIAL NETWORKING TACTIC THAN PROMOTING YOUR LIBRARY THROUGH BLOGS, TWEETS AND THE LIKE.

BY BILL FRENCH

It seems that everyone believes you must participate in social media by broadcasting your business information, promoting your domain expertise, and using other conversational tactics to win new prospects. While there's no debate that outbound marketing—especially through social media—is important, there's another approach that can be far more productive in terms of bang for the social buck. It's called "listening."

Most businesses spend the lion's share of their social media time and budget broadcasting; indeed, they shout often and loudly in an attempt to get noticed or command attention. However, if they dialed that effort back a little and spent more time reading (relevant) social media artifacts, they'd realize it typically leads to new business prospects, public relations opportunities, and sales.

I'm not talking about surfing the Web and reading blogs and tweets and spending hours on Facebook—I'm suggesting far more sophisticated methods of developing immediate and sustainable awareness of key social media content that can lead to productive business relationships and transactions. This requires a carefully designed social media dashboard that is customized for specific business segments and integrated with relevant conversations. It also requires periodic tuning and maintenance, not to mention a consistent focus on your market segment.

If you invest your time in a robust social media listening post and use it diligently, you'll naturally develop participation techniques that will far surpass the "broadcast-centric" methodology. In a sense, what I'm suggesting is that you consider coming in through the back door.

As many of you know, the massive topology of social networking services and social media sites, tools and applications is enough to overwhelm even the most prolific Internet surfer. Organizations large and small need to streamline the social media process and develop strategic methodologies that are sustainable and profit-minded. We all know that good listening habits lead to deeper understanding, and this is true with social networking—a listening-centric attitude is exactly the right approach to make this happen. But what should you listen for, and how should you do it?

BILL FRENCH is an information architect specializing in Internet applications. He is the co-founder of MyST Technology and senior editor for iPhoneCTO.

What to Listen For

There are three key listening targets; customers/prospects, competitors, and experts. Here are some actionable listening objectives to establish for each:

Customers and prospects. When it comes to customers and future customers, it's easy to get overwhelmed with feedback that is unrelated to your library activities. Ideally, you want to focus on gathering information that will lead to actionable and bona fide business conversations.

Ask yourself these questions:

- What can prospects do with services like yours?
- What are the unmet needs that your customers and prospects discuss?
- How important are these unmet needs to your customers and prospects?
- Are your prospects open to new ideas?
- What is the vernacular of these prospects and future customers?
- Can you detect any pitfalls in approaching these prospects about your services?

Competitors. To the extent your library or information center has a competitor, it's probably Google or Bing. More specifically, your *customers* are your competitors, because many of them share a mindset that they can find the information they need online using their own search skills and experience foraging for information. During the last decade, the average number of keywords in search queries has risen sharply, indicating that consumers are less ambiguous about their interests.

As you develop your listening strategy and social networking skills, you must adopt a broader definition of the term "competitor." Competitors, and what they're discussing, represent one of the best resources of knowledge in social media. It's critical that you observe and follow the steps your competitors take in their social media marketing. The greatest competitive advantage you can achieve is fundamentally based on mapping your competitors' strategies.

To develop your competitive listening strategy, ask yourself the following questions:

- Do your competitors engage in conversations with your customers and prospects?
- What are the skills and capabilities of your competitors?
- How are your competitors differentiating themselves from your services?
- What are your prospects and future customers asking for from your competitors?
- What services do your competitors offer in social networks? How often do they offer them?
- What kinds of customers do your competitors attempt to attract?
- Do your competitors leverage multiple social networks for visibility and conversations?
- Who are the partners that your competitors reference most?

Experts. Who are the experts in your library segment, and what are they saying about your market? What business trends do experts in your segment discuss, and which are most important? How are your customers and prospects responding to the content and conversations generated by experts in your segment?

Answering these questions will go a long way toward helping you improve the quality of your services and position your library as a key resource within your organization.

Creating a Listening Model

As you ponder these three targets, consider how to create a simple and sustainable listening model for answering these questions. There are many ways to listen to conversations occurring in social networks. With an abundance of opportunities to listen, we must create a methodology that is practical given limited time resources.

Typing queries every day is an extremely inefficient approach; instead, the key to success in a listening strategy involves *persistent search*. The concept of persistent search allows you to create a model wherein repeatable search queries are processed in real time without requiring you to remember or type them.

Two products that can provide essential listening services and that are efficient and freely available are Gist and HootSuite. Both of these tools are Web-based, so there's nothing to install. Furthermore, they can be accessed from any computer, are relatively secure, and provide mobile versions of their services.

While Gist is designed to track people that you've had conversations with in the past and future, it can also be shaped to track people and companies you don't know or with which you don't have relationships (yet). Gist literally provides a unified dashboard for watching and observing people you know, as well as people you want to know, participate in social media. It serves as an ideal listening post.

One of the reasons Gist is such a compelling tool for listening to and observing your industry in the context of social networking is that it can be shaped to include people and companies that are most important to your business activities. But the designers of Gist also recognized the need to prioritize certain companies and individuals within the context of your listening strategy, so each individual and company tracked in your Gist dashboard can be ranked with an importance factor ranging from 0 to 100. The higher this number, the more importance these individuals and companies are given when calling attention to their social networking participation.

For example, imagine you're the manager of an intellectual property law library and you want to track all of the top professionals in your field who are using Twitter and are active in social media. Using Gist and Tweep ML, a service that curates lists of the most influential people who use Twitter across many domains of expertise, you can add the 100 most influential intellectual property professionals to your Gist dashboard. Just follow these steps:

1. Create a free account at Gist.com.
2. In a new browser window, create a special Twitter account. Give it any reasonable name you want and

As you develop your listening strategy and social networking skills, you must adopt a broader definition of the term "competitor." Competitors, and what they're discussing, represent one of the best resources of knowledge in social media.

make it a protected account.

3. Open a new browser window to TweepML (the intellectual property list), scroll to the bottom, and login to your special Twitter account. This will cause your special Twitter account to follow all of the people in the list.
4. Login to your Gist account, select the "account" option (upper right), and connect your new Twitter account to your Gist account. The top intellectual property members on Twitter will be added to your Gist account.

You now have a comprehensive approach for tracking intellectual property discussions taking place in social networks. You can refine your approach by tagging all of these new people with a special keyword so you can see them all with one click. Over time, you'll be able to identify what each person discusses to get a better sense of your interest in their conversations. The ones you consider interesting and relevant can be ranked higher; the ones who are not so interesting can be ranked lower. This will increase the "signal to noise" ratio and ensure that the information you monitor through your dashboard will be highly relevant to your library activities.

Many lists pertinent to libraries and librarians are available to help you identify leading people and companies participating in Twitter and other social networks. For example, Tweep ML includes a list of the hundred most popular Twitter librarian participants (http://tweepml.org/Libr/). By following this collection of librarians participating in Twitter, you'll likely find key people and companies worthy of following.

While specific "Gistonomies" are useful in monitoring collections of individuals and companies in specific business categories, you should consider integrating your contact list and e-mail conversations into Gist. There's a strong probability that the people you know and the companies with which they are affiliated represent a significant collection of insights that will prove useful when added to Gist. This can be achieved by connecting your e-mail client or Web service to Gist.

For businesses, managing Twitter accounts and engaging in social media are best accomplished with a Web-based application designed for multiple accounts and multiple participants. Two systems that do this well are CoTweet and HootSuite. HootSuite is my preferred choice if mobile media intelligence is required (with Apple's iPhone, Apple's iPad, or Google Android-based smart phones). HootSuite also excels in social media publishing automation.

While HootSuite is one of the best platforms for listening to conversations in Twitter, it also serves as a publishing platform. Although the focus of this article is social listening, this process will invariably lead to an urge to publish, and HootSuite will streamline outbound messaging.

HootSuite, like Gist, is a free Web-based service that also includes a native iPhone application. Like Gist, HootSuite also can be programmed to provide a window into specific areas of market and social media interest while also serving as your Twitter authoring and reading platform. Authoring new posts is simple and effective and can be used to publish to social networks beyond Twitter, such as Facebook.

HootSuite provides a flexible, multi-account/multi-panel approach that can be configured to display numerous aspects of your Twitter account(s). But it also supports arbitrary persistent search panels that can be customized to display the most recent tweets about keywords, other Twitter accounts, and any general content that's important to your social media monitoring strategy.

Commonly used HootSuite columns include features for monitoring mentions of your Twitter account and your organization, direct messages, sent messages, and search columns. Other types of columns may also be configured for tracking activity in Linkedin, Facebook, and even Twitter lists.

Simplicity and Focus

As mentioned earlier, to the extent your library has a competitor, it's more likely to be your own customer armed with Google and some successful experiences finding information online. While the average search engine user may feel like he or she is skilled and successful, library professionals know this may not be the case at all. The typical Google user has a false belief that Google searches nearly everything on the Web.

The best way to combat this trend is to embrace it through a social listening strategy. The key to developing a successful listening strategy hinges on simplicity and focus. As you develop your listening approach, try to resist the urge to look under every rock and, instead, continually refine your content sources, deleting those that are not producing actionable and useful conversations. **SLA**

When the Crowd Isn't Wise, Trust Your Librarian

BY USING THEIR PRESENCE TO THEIR ADVANTAGE AND FACILITATING SOCIAL NETWORKS WITHIN THEIR ORGANIZATIONS, LIBRARIANS CAN REDEFINE THEIR ROLES AND ENHANCE THEIR VALUE.

BY EDWARD CASTRONOVA, PHD

James Surowiecki's *Wisdom of Crowds* argues that fine, funny things happen when you aggregate opinions. Maybe there's a bunch of people who, like me, aren't exactly sure whether crème brulee involves custard or tapioca pudding, but if we polled a million people and went with the majority opinion, we'd almost always get it right.

The wisdom of crowds poses a problem for a librarian. What if people in search of information could always effortlessly tap into the collective wisdom of millions of others? Actually, this day is upon us already, isn't it? Everything on the Web is tagged for content by folks like you and me. Google and Bing and Facebook are not generating any new knowledge or analysis—they are simply aggregating and reporting the effect of all the clicking we do. We are the crowd, and our collective wisdom is showing up not just on Wikipedia pages, but in the sorting and prioritizing of all Internet-based information.

And, as we all know, it won't be long before all information is Web-based. Even now, most students' searches stop when they come to books and articles that are not instantly available online. Those materials are ignored in favor of pieces that can be read right now.

Anything undigitized is relegated to the land of lost, archaic, unimportant knowledge. If someone wrote something really important, so the logic seems to go, it will be found in works dating from 2005—so, cite the 2005 piece and ignore the 1995 one. Everything we want to know, for better or worse, is out there in the cloud of servers, not on library shelves.

The Individual v. the Crowd

Why is this a problem for specialists in library science? Because they, along with editors, curators, disc jockeys, reviewers, and prioritizers of all stripes, make their living by providing precisely this kind of service. Prioritizers do many things, but one of their main roles has always been to assist people with their searches.

What is the top work on leadership in enterprises? Who is the main authority on rat cognition? What companies are actively involved in windmill production, and why? If I like Kruder and Dorfmeister, will I like Thievery Corporation? Who are the must-have artists in human figure sculpture today? Is this article an impact piece that people find interesting? What pieces in this

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area cannot be ignored? The Internet has the answers.

The services provided by crowds will no doubt broaden beyond mere tagging and sorting. Clay Shirky's *Here Comes Everybody* provides page after page of reasons why collective wisdom is becoming collective action. If there is any issue or question that a massive number of people care about, a massive movement will emerge around it. We are already seeing the effects in places as far apart as Massachusetts and Iran. Crowds develop quickly.

What's a prioritizer to do? What services can an editor provide if the Internet can tell us when papers have an impact and when they don't? How can a curator argue that the pieces in her collection are the most important works in an area when the Internet tells us that all working artists and collectors in that area ignore them? How can anyone in the business of opining about the value of digitized information and experience offer anything that the crowd cannot?

In sum, is there any role for individual expertise on these and other matters? And if there is a role, is it big enough to support a career?

Fighting for Attention

Let's look at some possible roles that an informed person might fill. For starters, let's consider the role of expert information. Suppose Jane knows more than anyone on earth about the Spitfire fighter plane. She is an absolute freak about that plane and has spent her whole life collecting pictures, stories, poems, scholarly works, engineering specifications, films, and strategic analyses about it.

If we're in 1990, all that stuff sits in her basement. But since it's 2010, it all ends up on her Web site. She has a blog, too, and she writes all kinds of things about the Spitfire just for fun. If you type "spitfire" into Google, you go straight there.

So Jane is an expert, and her information is helping anybody who wants to know about Spitfires. The problem (if it is a problem) is that Jane has put all of her expertise out into the world for free. Any other expert who has slightly less information about Spitfires can be safely ignored.

The only reason people would go to someone with less knowledge and expertise would be if Jane began charging for her services. If she did that, her monthly revenues would be $0, because there are at least 20 or 30 Spitfire freaks out there who can do just about the same thing that she does, and at least one of them will be crazy enough to do it all for free. Then that person will become the famous Spitfire expert, and Jane will be ignored.

In the end, mere expertise in subject areas is going to be increasingly hard to transmute into services for hire. So, if expertise is out, what else might an informed person provide?

A second possibility is judgment and discernment. Suppose Frank has better taste than the rest of us—he knows a good Bordeaux like nobody else. Frank could write wine reviews and ask people to pay him for them.

But honestly, how big is that market? How many people need to be so absolutely sure they are getting the very best wine or cheese that they are willing to pay Frank for his opinion? Frank better have one heck of a fine palate, and the things he judges had better be very important to people. Otherwise, his erstwhile customers will go with Annie, whose palate is so-so but whose opinions are free.

A third possibility is entertainment. Alfonse and Gaston know almost as much about natural theology as any other journal editors out there, but their commentary is so lively and fun that everybody goes to their Web site first. So, when they put up banner ads and make small asks for subscriptions to their content, people pay.

> If I were a librarian, I would spend a lot of time looking at new trends that senior executives are likely to ask about.

This, however, is a depressing prospect. Are we to believe that the only way a human can compete against crowd wisdom is by resorting to making wisecracks? Unfortunately, there is something to the idea that everybody is an entertainer, and we see this in works like Davenport and Beck's *Attention Economy* and Reeves and Read's *Total Engagement*. Here the argument is that everybody—companies, teachers, charities, even parents, for heaven's sakes—is now caught in a vicious war of attention-seeking. If you want to achieve any objective at all, you need to get people to pay attention to you, so you bombard them with demands for attention all day and night.

We are all trying to manage this tidal wave of attention seeking, so we put up filters of all kinds. Yet when we go out to perform our work, our job requires that first we get through someone else's filter—we have to get them to open up and listen to us! Consequently, we see news anchors shifting from the Walter Cronkite mold to women whose faces and figures would have graced centerfolds a generation ago. Reviewers become entertainers and entertainers become de facto reviewers. Journal editing becomes passé.

On the whole, then, the prospects for a career as an expert, a judge, or a sifter of information and experience seem bleak. However, the engagement perspective just discussed illuminates a way forward (or two) that does not involve selling out and becoming a glorified clown.

Holding to Basic Truths

Think about what has happened in music. Music has become available as digital files. This means there is very little work these days for a music dis-

Since only experts can facilitate the right kinds of social networks and provide the things that crowds cannot, experts will remain important throughout the information-seeking process.

tributor—someone who chooses music, puts it on a disc, and sells it. But that does not mean there is no role for someone who makes music.

Granted, the road to making money as a musician has evolved. One thing, however, has not changed—if you are a musician, you have a talent that few others possess. And, if you are smart about it, you can charge people money to hear your music. You can ask them to pay for a live performance, an experience that cannot be reproduced online. And you can ask them to pay very small amounts for things that cost you very little to provide, such as recordings of your performances. Both of these models seem to work very well in music.

The example of musicians points to two ideas regarding human experts. One involves the human element; the other involves social networks.

First, the human element. Ask yourself this: What can a librarian do that a digitized crowd cannot?

It turns out that crowds are often not wise at all, and when they err, librarians, editors, and curators must be there to provide direction. Crowds make mistakes in particular, identified situations, and such situations can be readily identified by contrasting your expertise to the data provided by Google or Facebook.

One such situation is herd behavior: Sometimes everyone thinks that everyone knows what's going on, when in fact we are all just following one random signal. This situation is more prevalent when little is actually known about the future but all the players in the game are forced to make moves. The stock market is a classic example.

In such circumstances, an expert who keeps a cool head and holds fast to basic truths will establish a reputation for reliability. Thus, if I were a librarian, I would spend a lot of time looking at new trends that senior executives are likely to ask about. Which things are hype, and which are genuine evolutions? There's a strong future for experts who position themselves as hype-killers, because Google will never kill hype—it will only amplify it.

Another type of circumstance in which a human expert has an advantage is one that involves simple presence. An expert who comes to your door, meets with you regularly, and provides good information for meetings and presentations is a clear asset. Google can't do those things.

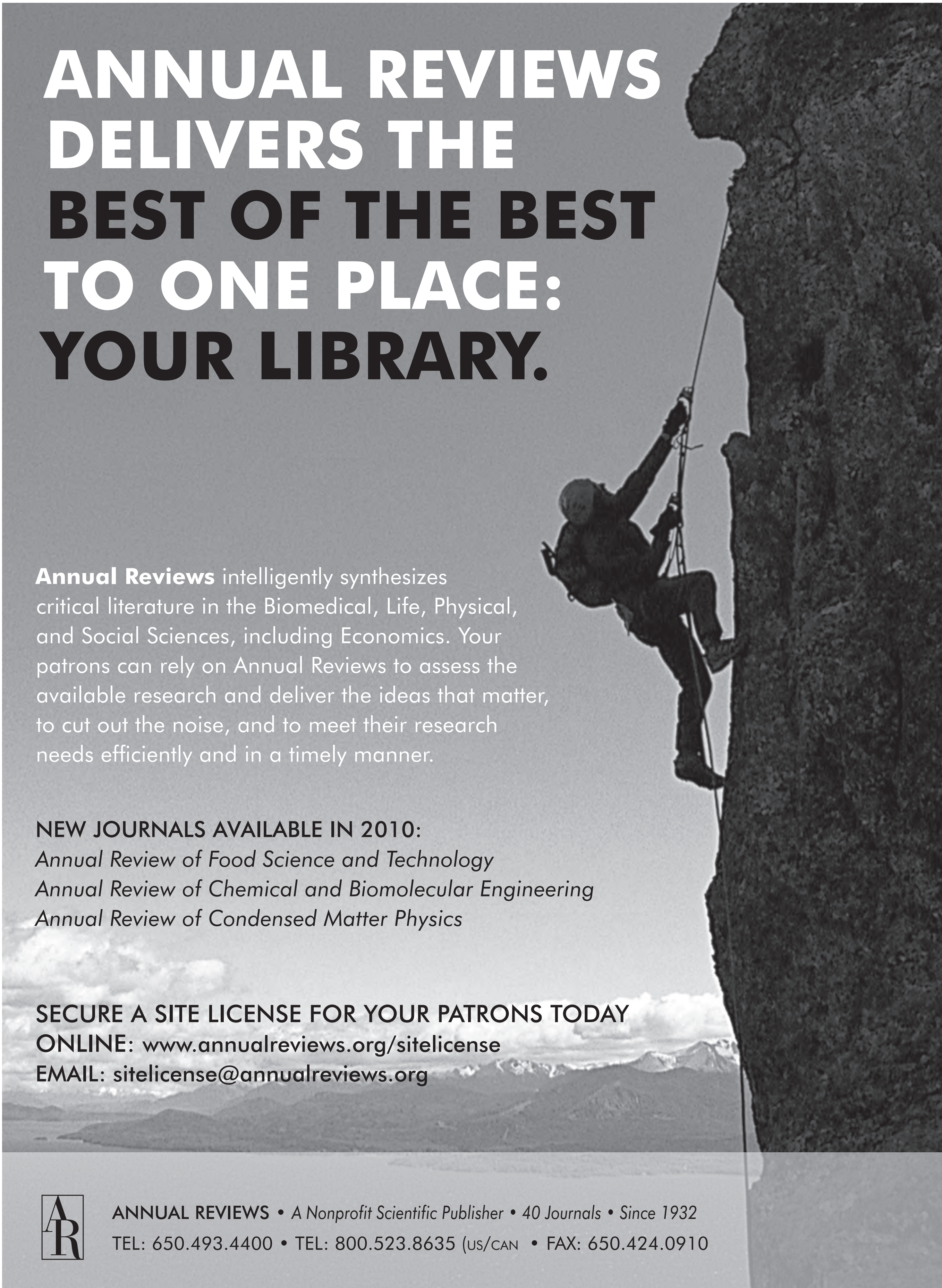
So, give a live performance once a month—for example, "Stuff in the library you want to know about." Or, consider what you can do with a Google/Bing/Facebook/Wikipedia search that an executive cannot do. Maybe your role shifts from information guidance and review to actual analysis. Google can't analyze a field of information, but you can.

Second, the example of $1 music downloads shows that you can provide a huge service to an organization by facilitating its social network. iTunes makes money not by creating music but by facilitating a massive social network of music fans, charging them pocket change for their downloads. In return, iTunes gets all of their opinion information.

Can your Information Services Division pull off a similar stunt? Suppose that every time someone performs a Google search from his or her desktop, that information is stored and then fed to the next person who makes that search. Suddenly, Bob and Alice are mutually aware that they have both been looking for information about a competitor's product. Collaboration follows.

The internal social information network of your organization has every possibility of being more valuable than that of the cloud, because it is more tightly focused on the organization's concerns. Your role is to design and maintain that network. Think of the brains of your organization's members as part of your library. How do you store, sort, and report all of their queries and findings? How do you link their expertise to outside expertise? How do you get them to buy in and share their knowledge? If you can answer those questions, you can put yourself in front of the digital wave in the same way that iTunes has replaced traditional recording companies.

These are just a few ideas about how the contribution of experts is changing. Since only experts can facilitate the right kinds of social networks and provide the things that crowds cannot, experts will remain important throughout the information-seeking process. The trick is to get there and do it now—to remake the position, the office, the lines of communication, and the organization's expectations, all before somebody higher up asks, "Why do we need a librarian when we have Google?" **SLA**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10 Questions: Dennie Heye

FROM HELPING ACQUIRE BOOKS FOR A LIBRARIAN IN UGANDA TO CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR INFORMATION PROFESSIONALS TO COLLABORATE IN ONLINE DISCUSSIONS, DENNIE HEYE IS LEVERAGING SLA'S GLOBAL COMMUNITY TO MAKE CONNECTIONS.

BY FORREST GLENN SPENCER

Say "the Netherlands," and many people think of the Old World—wooden shoes, classicist architecture, and the so-called "Dutch masters" painters (Rembrandt and Vermeer, among others). But the Netherlands is very much at the forefront of modern Europe, with a vibrant economy and diverse culture, elite universities and research centers, and multinational businesses and organizations.

Dennie Heye works for one of those businesses. He's the global knowledge manager at Shell, a leader in the field of energy exploration and production. His work for Shell and for the special library profession has been recognized for its successful blending of modern technology and traditional information skills—two years ago, Dennie was presented with the SLA Europe Information Professional Award.

Information Outlook spoke to Dennie recently about his background, his hopes for our profession and the role of SLA in the information century.

Q: What kind of work do you do for Shell? Please give us a glimpse of a day in your life.

As the global knowledge manager for the Human Resources IT Division, I am responsible for the definition and implementation of a strategy covering the technical, content and organizational aspects of knowledge and information management. This includes not only creating the strategy but also implementing it, which makes the job very rewarding.

A big task this year for me is to document the story of our human resources system. Parts of the story are available in different documents and in project staff members' heads. I'm going to create a large wiki around this project so that, in the future, everyone involved can easily read and learn about the context of the project. Collecting information through desk research and interviews is just one part, but structuring that huge amount of information and summarizing it is even more important.

Q: Walk us through your life as a special librarian. Where have you been, and what have you done?

After university, I landed a job with Deloitte & Touche in their Amsterdam office. I helped to transform the library and archive into a more virtual knowledge center, offering desktop research services and managing knowledge

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bases. I also set up the very first Deloitte & Touche intranet.

In 2002, I started working for Shell as part of a new team to set up a global information and collaboration portal. It was a very exciting project—we were pushing the envelope with new technology to offer users a single, intelligent portal to cover all their information needs. I was responsible for taxonomy design, search engine requirements and content sources. In that capacity, I was working closely with colleagues in the Shell Exploration and Production Information Center.

I transferred to that information center in 2005 as the literature searcher and innovation advisor. After a year I was also tasked with managing the scientific and technical content licenses and developing the virtual library.

Four years later, I found a great new challenge as knowledge manager for an IT department. I am enjoying my work and the many challenges that it offers.

If there is a theme to my professional development, it would have to be that information management is about connecting, not collecting. I see my role always as connecting people to people, people to information tools, and people to information.

Q: You're a member of the *Information Outlook* Advisory Council. What does that involve?

The advisory council works with the magazine's editor to help set editorial direction and determine editorial content. We recommend themes, articles and authors to the editor and review proposals for new articles.

Q: I understand you recently put together a proposal for what you're calling "*Information Outlook* 2.0." Tell us more about this proposal.

It all started at the Online Information conference in 2008, where I met Gloria Zamora, who was then SLA's president-elect. We had an interesting talk, and afterwards I volunteered to help explore a new future for *Information Outlook*.

I took this position: If I were to start *Information Outlook* today from scratch, what would it look like? In my view, the mission of *IO* is to provide a platform to publish, discuss, share, and collaborate on topics relevant to the SLA community. So, coming back to my mantra that information management is about connecting rather than collecting, I see *IO* as a platform for connecting.

That platform is a hybrid, combining the best features of online and the best features of print. Thus, *IO* 2.0 online will be an interactive community platform where conversation is central, while *IO* 2.0 print will be a journal containing the "best of" the online platform. The idea is still in its early stages and will be discussed further at the advisory council's meeting in June at the 2010 SLA Annual Conference.

Dennie reviews a content workflow diagram with colleagues Helen Woodcock and Jeroen van der Burg (right).

Q: You're also active in SLA's Division of Petroleum and Energy Resources.

I'm the international relations chair for the division. It's not a large division, but

Name: Dennie Heye

Joined SLA: 1998

Current employer: Global knowledge manager at Shell

Previous employer: Information management roles at Deloitte & Touche

Education: Bibliotheek & Documentaire Informatie (BDI, the Dutch equivalent of a library and information science school); Tilburg University (marketing and sociology of information products)

First job: Tour guide at the Office of the Future, a concept office showcasing near-future developments in information technology, office design, media and virtual working

First information professional job: Data entry for Deloitte & Touche

Biggest challenge today: Convincing colleagues that information is an asset and should be managed as such

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Blog address: http://olfh.blogspot.om

Twitter address: @obnoxiouslibrn

Dennie assists health and safety focal point Jeroen van der Burg with a presentation about health and safety.

it's a wonderful resource and network. Over the years, the division has been helpful to me in different ways, mostly in providing an opportunity to build leadership skills.

Q: Among your many activities, you're working to help procure books and other library resources for an SLA member in Africa. Tell us about this project and how you got involved in it.

In 2007, the Division of Petroleum and Energy Resources was approached by Stephen Kizza, an energy librarian from Uganda. As I was the international relations chair, I received his request for information and presented it to the division. Pretty soon, we were starting to think of ways to help Stephen.

So far, we've arranged free access to e-journals and abstract databases, sponsored his SLA membership, and supported him in his development. Recently we were able to arrange for a diversity and inclusiveness award for Stephen, so now he can afford to come to the SLA conference in New Orleans. I'm really looking forward to finally meeting Stephen and shaking his hand after all these years. [To learn more about Stephen, listen to a recent podcast interview at http://bit.ly/Ck0Aj.]

Q: How are you harnessing technology to make information more accessible and viable to other information specialists?

E-mail is still very powerful; over the years, I have helped and been helped by colleagues around the world through e-mail. However, social networks like LinkedIn are now growing and making it easier to establish a valuable network.

Information professionals are born networkers and ready to help, which creates a powerful combination. I strongly feel we should help our users acquire technological skills as well. How can you find a valuable network for a certain topic? What tips can you use to expand that network? This is a skill that not all users immediately have.

Q: You're an author as well as a blogger. If you would, talk a little about your articles and your book.

I have always written about and presented different topics related to our profession. In 2005, I was approached by a publisher to write a book, which resulted in *Characteristics of the Successful 21st Century Information Professional.* This book aims to offer information professionals a practical guide to skills like managing time, making presentations and encouraging creativity.

Besides being a serious author, I have always had an eye for the lighter side of our profession and working in offices. I have peers in large organizations, and I started to collect Dilbert-like stories from them. Since July 2007, I've been publishing satirical stories on my blog, Obnoxious Librarian from Hades (http://olfh.blogspot.com). People send me all kinds of stories and I just take them over the top.

Q: I'm interested in your presentation on information visualization. Would you describe it, for those who may not have read or seen the presentation?

People in a large group are visually oriented, meaning they process information best when it is visualized. Over the years, I have been working on different methods of information visualization to help users better analyze information, find trends, make faster decisions, or uncover hidden links between topics.

A good example would be the use of a geographical search engine on top of scientific geosciences articles. Geoscientists are very map-oriented in the way they find and manage information, so searching by keywords is not very helpful to them.

A few years ago, I ran a project with a major scientific publisher and a geographical search engine, whereby our geoscientists could use an interface like Google Maps to indicate what part of the world they would like to see information about. The search engine had automatically geo-tagged gigabytes of scientific articles, which helped the geoscientists find relevant articles they never would have found using standard keyword searches.

Q: What comes next in your professional development?

Our profession is still changing and offering new horizons, so I see quite a number of interesting challenges. That said, I have always been fond of hosting workshops and lecturing. So, who knows—one day I may find a good opportunity to do more of this to help a new generation of information professionals. **SLA**

Protecting Information Resources Before and After Emergencies

LIBRARIANS NEED TO PLAN FOR EMERGENCIES BOTH LARGE AND SMALL SO THEY ARE READY TO PRESERVE THEIR COLLECTIONS AND ENSURE BUSINESS CONTINUITY IN THE EVENT A DISASTER STRIKES.

BY PRAVEENA RAMAN, MSC, MSLIS, AND LISL ZACH, MSLS, MBA, PHD

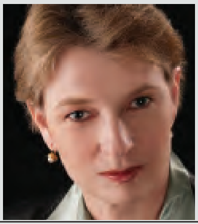
In 1984, a library assistant arriving for work one morning at a small biotechnology company in Boston was greeted by a disheartening sight: The one-room information center was flooded with ankle-deep water. Desks and piles of paper were wet from water dripping from above. In one corner, the library director was trying to dry the pages of an expensive journal with a hair dryer. A huge suction pump was running, trying to suck up water from the soggy carpet.

The assistant later learned that someone working in the laboratory above had accidentally left a faucet running overnight. Water had filled the sink, flooded the laboratory, and dripped down into the information center below.

Incidents such as this can happen at any time, causing small-scale emergencies. A burst water pipe, a fire or a server crash can cause an emergency affecting a building or an entire organization, while hurricanes, earthquakes, tornadoes, blizzards or forest fires can cause wide-scale disasters affecting entire geographical areas.

Emergencies and disasters, whether large or small, man-made or natural, can cause property damage and stall the workings of an organization. To prepare for these types of situations, libraries and information centers should have a plan to mitigate hazards and ensure business continuity.

PRAVEENA RAMAN, senior information specialist at Elan Pharmaceuticals, was a member of SLA's Information Professionals Alliance on Natural Disasters and Accidents (IPANDA) Task Force and currently serves on SLA's Emergency Preparedness and Recovery Advisory Council. She is a trained volunteer on the Community Emergency Response Team of the Fremont (California) Fire Department and is a licensed HAM operator for disaster communications. She can be reached at praveena.raman@elan.com.



LISL ZACH, an assistant professor in the College of Information Science and Technology at Drexel University, was a member of the faculty at Louisiana State University during Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. She recently completed an IMLS-funded research project to investigate library and information services provided during community-based disasters. She chairs SLA's Emergency Preparedness and Recovery Advisory Council (EPRAC) and is a member of the Disaster and Emergency Preparedness Task Force of Drexel's Engineering Cities Initiative. She can be contacted at sez.23@drexel.edu.

In a recent survey conducted by SLA's Emergency Preparedness and Recovery Advisory Council (EPRAC), 64 percent of the 320-plus librarians and information professionals who responded said the most important role they can play in planning for emergencies is to focus on protecting, preserving, and providing access to collections. Since providing information is the main purpose of libraries and information centers, this role is very much in line with the overarching goal of ensuring the business continuity of an organization. To do their part in fulfilling this goal, information professionals should start with the three "R's" of disaster mitigation: readiness, response and recovery.

While many information professionals may never have to respond to or recover from an emergency or disaster, all information professionals should prepare for an unexpected crisis by taking the steps required for readiness. Readiness is the phase in which planning for a disaster or emergency takes place. It can either precede or follow response and recovery, depending on whether a disaster has occurred.

Following are brief descriptions of each of these phases as well as lists of some general steps that information professionals can take to protect their resources and mitigate the risks of a disaster (Raman, Weaver and Fraser 2006). These steps are just a start—the references and suggested readings at the end of the article provide more detailed information on this topic.

WHAT SLA IS DOING

SLA's Emergency Preparedness and Response Advisory Council (EPRAC) was established in 2008 to continue the work that had been started by the Information Professionals Alliance on Natural Disasters and Accidents (IPANDA) after the terrible natural disasters of 2004-2005. The mission of EPRAC is to investigate and establish ways in which the global community of information professionals can use their skills, competencies and resources to help organizations, governments and individuals recover from natural disasters. By focusing on voluntary contributions of time and resources rather than direct financial donations, EPRAC has helped to develop alliances between SLA and other library and information organizations, such as the Disaster Information Specialist project at the National Library of Medicine.

EPRAC conducted a survey of SLA members regarding their perceptions of the roles that information professionals can play in emergency planning and recovery efforts. The majority of the 329 members responding to the survey see the primary roles of information professionals as protecting, preserving and providing access to their collections and restoring services quickly.

Using the survey results as guidance, the council decided to present a pre-conference continuing education course in New Orleans on protecting library collections before disaster strikes. The course will be co-sponsored by the Museums, Arts and Humanities and the Pharmaceutical and Health Technology (PHTD) divisions.

Planning for a Disaster

In her article about the lessons learned by the California State University (CSU) library during the Northridge earthquake in 1994, Mary Finley (1999) discusses the importance of planning for a disaster. Due to its proximity to the epicenter of the earthquake, the university experienced significant damage. The library had a disaster plan in place, which helped the staff start their response process quickly, but the plan was not comprehensive enough to address the damage the earthquake caused. The plan had been written in response to a previous earthquake, so the library staff had already identified many of the risks posed by an earthquake, but the plan did not account for the possibility of losing a physical building as well as an entire collection.

In the planning stage, resources and their locations are surveyed and inspected for potential problems. Chronic problems, such as water leaks or drips, are rectified and safety procedures and systems are checked. Vulnerable collections are identified and noted appropriately. A list of experts and companies specializing in disaster mitigation who can be contacted for help in salvaging the collection is developed.

Libraries with similar collections should collaborate to serve as back-ups to each other during emergencies. For small emergencies, a local network can suffice, but networks with libraries in different geographic areas should be developed for wide-scale disasters.

Information professionals should take the following initial steps to plan for a disaster:

- Know the types of disasters that can affect your library or information center and the risks they can pose.
- Research different disaster plans and gather information.
- Formulate a disaster plan to prepare your staff and collection for response and recovery in the event of a disaster. Make sure the plan has provisions for small, large and wide-scale disasters.
- Know your parent organization's disaster plan and see how your plan fits into the larger scheme.
- Create a disaster response team with lead responsibilities for the different phases of response and recovery.
- Develop a staff communication plan.
- Maintain a list of staff with their offsite contact information.
- Plan for protecting both digital and paper resources.
- Back up electronic information on offsite servers, preferably in another geographic area.
- Periodically inspect and maintain the physical property, making sure to fix leaks in ceilings, verify that sprinklers are present and working, bolt down shelves in earthquake-prone areas, and so on.

- Include a financial contingency plan in your budget.
- Make sure copies of contracts are readily available in case they are needed during the recovery phase.
- Develop a list of contractors and confidentiality agreements for them.
- Build relationships with professional recovery agents in your area.
- Establish a network of libraries with similar collections in your area as well as in another geographical area. This is especially important for libraries with special collections.

Responding and Recovering

When a disaster strikes, ensuring the safety of personnel is the foremost priority. The disaster response team (if one is in place) or staff and other responders should then assess the situation and determine the extent of the damage. Lastly, they should start rescuing and recovering collections.

After the damage has been assessed and the rescue and treatment of the collections have started, the recovery phase will begin. In this phase, information professionals have to start restoring the normal operations of the library. Decisions have to be made and solutions found to ensure the library can function without some of its resources.

There is no clear demarcation of when the response period ends and recovery starts. In many incidents, both of them can and often do happen simultaneously. This is the time when collaborations and networks built during the planning stage come into play. For example, Finley (1999) mentions that during the recovery from the Northridge earthquake, the CSU library teamed up with other cooperating libraries and vendors to serve the information needs of CSU staff and students. CSU reference librarians worked at the cooperating libraries to help with the sudden influx of additional clientele.

In August 2005, when Hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans, the Howard-Tilton Memorial Library at Tulane University was flooded with eight feet of water. The collections in two of the buildings were affected and in danger of being damaged. The university had contracted with a disaster mitigation company to drain the buildings, and experts from the company worked with library staff to identify collections that needed to be salvaged and frozen for later restoration. With their assistance, the library reopened before the 2006 spring semester began.

In his article on the response and recovery efforts at the Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Andy Corrigan (2008) mentions that even though the library had developed a disaster mitigation plan before Katrina hit, it was not of much use during the actual disaster because it did not address a catastrophe of such magnitude. He concludes that in large-scale disasters, it is better for a library to be integrated into the organization's overall plan and to make use of that plan's resources, such as a qualified disaster mitigation company.

Following are steps librarians can take to ensure they are prepared to respond to and recover from potential emergencies:

- Practice establishing a command center as an operations center.
- Train the response team to look for and assess the type and extent of damage to the collection, taking special note of materials that are particularly sensitive to water or heat. The assessment should include any computer peripherals, hardware and software.
- Practice securing the area affected by the disaster
- Make sure insurance contracts, claims forms and contact information are readily available.
- Create a priority list for salvaging your collection and resources.
- Practice removing damaged collections and resources from the library.
- Develop a list of commercial services that might be needed.

Completing the Cycle

After any emergency or disaster, the response plan should be evaluated and revised, if necessary. The library/information center director should document the incident, suggest changes and improvements to the policies and processes, and thank those who assisted during the response and recovery period. Staff should review the requirements for readiness, response and recovery so they will be better prepared for the next such situation.

On a periodic basis, libraries should conduct drills and/or tabletop exercises with different scenarios to practice the response and recovery phases of their disaster plan. Staff should re-evaluate the plan at least once a year to fine-tune and update the plan when needed. As Laurie Bolger (2003) mentions, "There is no substitute for good advance preparation when it comes to disaster response. Time invested now in establishing an appropriate and effective plan will pay big dividends in ensuring the well-being of the collections entrusted to our care." **SLA**

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'It's Incumbent Upon Librarians to Give Us Something More'

THE INTERNET EXCELS AT PROVIDING INFORMATION QUICKLY, BUT LIBRARIANS CAN PROVIDE THE INTELLECTUAL CONTEXT FOR FACTS AND FIGURES AND ENCOURAGE THEIR CLIENTS TO CONSIDER A RANGE OF PERSPECTIVES.

AN INTERVIEW WITH NICHOLAS CARR / BY STUART HALES

Nicholas Carr surged to prominence earlier this decade with the publication of his controversial and celebrated Harvard Business Review article, "IT Doesn't Matter," and his follow-up book, Does IT Matter? Information Technology and the Corrosion of Competitive Advantage. By arguing that information technology had evolved from a proprietary technology used by companies to gain a strategic edge into an infrastructural technology shared by all, Carr ignited a debate on the value of IT and the merits of investing in technological innovation.

Since then, Carr has solidified his standing as one of the world's foremost voices on information technology and its impact on business and culture. Through his blog, "Rough Type," his columns and articles, and his books, he has focused attention on how the Internet is transforming the way we think, read, behave, and interact with others.

For example, in his 2008 Atlantic article, "Is Google Making Us Stupid?," Carr lamented that the Internet is eroding our ability to read deeply and absorb knowledge—the skills we develop from reading books. As he put it, "My mind now expects to take in information the way the 'Net distributes it: in a swiftly moving stream of particles. Once I was a scuba diver in the sea of words. Now I zip along the surface like a guy on a Jet Ski."

Carr will expound on this theme in his next book, *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*. *The Shallows* is scheduled to be published shortly before the 2010 SLA Annual Conference, at which Carr will deliver the closing keynote address.

Q: Your first magazine article and book argued that investments in computer technology were no longer providing the same return on investment they had been providing for many years, and now you're arguing that computers and search engines are changing people and society in ways that should concern us. Are you on some sort of crusade against information technology?

Well, I don't see myself as a crusader, but I do see myself as a skeptic—a skeptic who has a great fondness for computers and software and gadgets but who has come to distrust some of the promises that have been made about them. Those promises may be very practical ones about how buying

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a new computer system can transform your business or organization, but they lead me to question how our growing dependence on computer systems and particularly the Internet is influencing us as individuals and as members of society. For the last few years, that's been my main focus.

I've come to see in myself some changes in my ability to concentrate, to immerse myself in a train of thought or a piece of prose, and I've been struggling to make sense of that. That's the subject of my new book—I'm trying to track down some of the things I've noticed in myself. Basically, what I think I've discovered is that as we spend more and more time staring into our computer screens and gathering information more quickly from various sources, it does have a profound effect on the way we think, the way we use our memory, and even the way we act as members of society.

Q: Many experts and studies say we use the computer to skim, and if we see something we want to read, we print it out and read it later. Doesn't this suggest we're still reading things on paper—we're just reading things we found on the Internet?

I don't think most people today spend a whole lot of time printing out long pieces of writing from their computer and then sitting in a quiet room reading them. Some people do, but I don't think that's the way most people go about it.

I think computers have very much become reading media, not only in the traditional sense of using them to look at words on Web pages but also through using our telephones as text processing machines rather than voice processing machines. There are many more text messages than voice messages being sent today on telephones.

So the computer delivers huge amounts of text to us every day in addition to other types of media, and I think it is becoming our main medium for reading. But the type of reading that the computer promotes and encourages is very, very different from the type of reading that a printed book promotes. A printed book shields us from distraction; it promotes linear thinking and immerses us in a narrative or a particular argument in a way that can last for hours.

A computer, as a medium for reading, couldn't be more different—it puts text into a welter of distractions and interruptions. Computers, particularly networked computers, are multimedia devices, constantly feeding us alerts and messages and so forth. That's their strength as a medium, but as we come to use them for reading, we lose our attentiveness and our ability to immerse ourselves in the text. As a result, even though we gain a wealth of new information, we become, in the end, shallower, more superficial readers.

What I think librarians can help us do is broaden out beyond the types of results that search engines provide and take us off the beaten track a little bit.

PHOTO BY JOANIE SIMON

Q: Do you think e-readers will change that dynamic?

No, I think what will happen is that the e-reader will become one more application on a multipurpose computer. The traditional e-reader, which was pretty much a single-purpose device, did try to replicate the book experience by putting a page of text on the screen. On the other hand, you have the multi-purpose computer, including things like iPhones, which are now the dominant e-reading devices. As these two technological streams—the dedicated e-reader and the multipurpose computer—progress, I think we'll start to see them converge.

The iPad, which just came out, is an example of this type of convergence. Among other things, the iPad is being promoted as an e-reader, but it's not a dedicated e-reader. The e-reader software on the iPad is just one application among many that run on what is essentially a multipurpose computer.

We're now seeing signs that Amazon, in order for its Kindle to compete with the iPad, is moving in that same direction. Later this year, Amazon is going to open an apps store so that software developers can begin writing applications that can run on the Kindle. We'll probably see many more features incorporated into the Kindle and other e-readers, and ultimately what we'll have is a situation where e-reading becomes part of the multimedia system we have with our computers. There will be rich hyperlinks throughout the text, and video and audio will be embedded into the text, and all of this will give us new things to do while we're reading.

In the end, this is quite diverting and promotes a distracted, superficial relationship to the content. When transferred online, the pages of books begin to look more and more like Web pages, and I think that's where we're heading.

Q: Is this a people issue or a technology issue? Just because there's something on your computer doesn't mean you have to read it on your computer.

In *The Shallows*, I spend a lot of time looking at what we can learn from research on the brain. It's quite clear from the research that we like distractions, we like new information—particularly when that information has some social content, which more and more is what the Web delivers.

What happens is that it becomes very, very hard to disconnect, because we fear being out of touch. So even when we turn off our computer and try to pick up a book—and I've felt this in my own life—it becomes hard to immerse ourselves, to concentrate. We have this urge to go back to our computer to check e-mail, to click on links, to jump around.

What science tells us is that we train our brains, at a very deep level, in certain habits of mind that we practice and exercise a lot. It's not just a matter of turning off our computer and suddenly we return to our ability to be attentive and to concentrate for long periods. We maintain the habits of mind that we train our brains to use online.

In many ways this reflects a return to our natural state as human animals. If you think back to our origins, paying attention to a lot of things simultaneously was very advantageous to our survival—you didn't want to miss a source of food, and you didn't want to overlook a possible predator. So our natural state of mind, I think, is to keep shifting attention among different stimuli.

The Internet encourages that type of behavior. Books and other printed materials are best seen as an anomaly in our history that removed us from this natural state of distraction and forced us to pay attention. And that's what we risk losing as we become more dependent on computers and the Internet.

Q: So you feel we're losing the linear thinking ability that comes from focused reading?

Yes, and that becomes our overriding habit of mind. I'm not suggesting that it would be good to just sit back and think deeply all the time. You need the ability to scan and skim and jump around and find information quickly; you don't want to always be immersed in a train of thought. And yet, I think that to have the optimum human mind, you want to possess both of these characteristics—the ability to scan and skim, and the ability to pay deep attention to one thing for a long period of time. What the 'Net is doing is shifting the emphasis of our thought and pushing us more toward the skimming and scanning habit of mind and ever further away from the contemplative, reflective, attentive frame of mind.

Q: Can librarians do anything to reverse this trend and help us rediscover the value of deep reading?

I think the danger for librarians is that they will come to think of themselves essentially as Googlers. Honestly, the last couple of times I visited a library and asked for assistance, the first thing the librarian did was go onto Google and perform a search.

That's a very seductive reaction, and I think all of us increasingly have it, but I believe it's incumbent upon librarians to give us something more than we can get from Google. If they simply become people who Google for us, their future prospects are bleak.

What I think librarians can help us do is broaden out beyond the types of results that search engines provide and take us off the beaten track a little bit—not just conform to popular expectations on a particular subject, but cover more perspectives and offer more intellectually rigorous takes on a particular subject. This means moving away from always relying on what the computer says and looking at books and magazines and other forms of information.

Having said that, I know it's a very difficult challenge for librarians because they exist in a society that is being trained to get information very quickly and to answer every question with a quick list of links. And I know the pressures on librarians to respond to these expectations are very great, so I'm not naïve about the challenges that face librarians. But I think they need to resist the pressure to rely on search engines themselves, and part of that is training their clients or patrons that there is more to the world of the intellect than can be found through Google.

Q: So they should tell customers, "Here are some more perspectives on this topic that you might want to consider."

Exactly. For most subjects, particularly complicated ones, there's context that is often lost when we simply rely on a search engine to give us the quickest answer. The danger is that we begin to lose this sense of context. Facts are typically situated in a much broader intellectual discussion than a quick answer can provide, and to the extent that librarians can remind us of that and help open up that context to us, they will make it that much harder to replace them.

Q: Last year, a futurist predicted in the pages of *Information Outlook* that printed books will soon disappear. Do you share that view?

People have been predicting the demise of books for about 200 years, so I'm wary of standing up and making broad predictions on this topic. I think printed books, as well as printed magazines and maybe even printed newspapers, will be around in some quantity for a long time. There are still a lot of people who very much enjoy books.

But I do think that the book has already been pushed from the center of culture. Ever since Gutenberg invented his printing press and made books cheap and fairly popular more than 500 years ago, the book has been the center of culture, the most important medium for most people. I think that's now in the past. The book has faced threats from television and radio, but the biggest threat is clearly the Internet, which is becoming the central information medium for all of us.

I think books will continue to be around, but their readership and influence will continue to dwindle. And I think the biggest concern is that, more and more, authors will assume that people aren't very attentive, that they're constantly distracted, that they've got e-mails and text messages bombarding them, so book writing will shift away from more demanding and complex narratives and arguments to simpler ones. So I don't think that the mere existence of printed books is what's important—you have to look at the role books play in society and the changes that are taking place inside books themselves. **SLA**

Books and e-Books: As Different as Night and Day

Conversations about e-books tend to focus on their format, but the emphasis should be on whether changing a book's format also changes its purpose.

BY STEPHEN ABRAM, MLS

The transition to e-books is happening so fast, and there are so many issues to address, that it seems like the e-book juggernaut is moving along like a train with no brakes. I thought it might be useful to share my ideas on what we need to think about with respect to e-books and how we and our users and organizations will need to change our understanding of the very concept of a book.

I think that the issues facing special librarians fall into a few big buckets:

1. What is an e-book? Are they all that different from printed books?
2. What are the emerging e-book standards? Is there ever going to be just one?
3. What are the legal (and other) issues?
4. What's in the pipeline for e-books and devices?
5. What's the impact on special libraries and our users?

I hope to address these issues in my next few columns. For starters, let's think about e-books in general.

What is an e-Book?

I have always been very uncomfortable with how we talk about e-books in the academic and special library communities (and in the consumer market as well). I think we need a better language to describe e-books so we can discuss them in the context of libraries, work and research. So, what is the taxonomy of e-books?

I propose that the overall umbrella term be "e-resources." E-resources include a bunch of resources that libraries (and intranets) have come to know and love—databases, Web sites, articles, audio and video streaming media, and more. All of these contribute to 21st century business, research and academic environments. It's a fairly safe bet that there will be a lot more e-resources activity in the future.

E-books are a distinct subset of e-resources. Of course, they're also a format of books in general, just like other subtypes of books—textbooks, encyclopedias, novels, audio books, talking books, large-print editions, translations, Braille editions, and so on.

One of the dysfunctions in our conversations about e-books is that we often question whether the transmogrification of a printed book into an e-book does more than just change the format. I believe that this change is as amazing as that which happens in a pupa when a caterpillar mutates into a butterfly. The bigger question is, when we make books electronic, does their major intent change for better or worse?

To understand this change more deeply, it would be wise to consider e-books as more than printed books and reconsider how the various types of books came to be and why they exist. After all, in order to become books in the first place, some compromises had to be made, and these compromises may be overcome—or, perhaps, made worse—in the movement to an electronic format. Indeed, those of us who have studied the history of the book and have seen ancient scrolls and illuminated manuscripts know that parts of the book experience have been lost over time, even in print. So, let's consider the major divisions of book types and see what the process of transforming them into e-books does to them and whether it creates opportunities for us in the library, research and educational contexts.

Fiction versus Non-fiction

I'll start with fiction, because that seems to be where all of the consumer action is taking place, which is dampening a real evaluation of e-book formats in professional and special library environments. Few special libraries depend on fiction for their stock in trade—we are largely purveyors of non-fiction resources.

Fiction is written to be read (indeed, experienced in our imaginations) in the exact order in which it is written and from beginning to end. That may seem obvious, but very few other book types are written for the reader to engage the entire book and use his or her imagination to experience the book's story.

Fiction comes in many genres—literature, children's stories, mysteries,

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romance novels, graphic novels, comics, plays, etc.—all of which can be easily displayed and read on an e-reader. Although there are some color display limitations facing a few e-readers, these constraints should disappear soon.

Non-fiction, on other hand, need not be experienced in a specific order. You can enter the book at any point you like and read only a chapter or paragraph or view an illustration. You can access the work through its table of contents or indices.

In e-formats, non-fiction works can be searched easily in free text. Indeed, this is one of the great benefits of Google Book Search, Amazon Search Inside-the-Book, Project Gutenberg, and others—they disaggregate non-fiction works into their component pages, paragraphs and chapters, and these components may be sufficient to address many research questions and needs.

There are huge differences between fiction and non-fiction books, and the transition to electronic formats has magnified these differences. For example, it is one thing to imagine reading a work of fiction on a personal reader like a Kindle. The experience remains personal, and you engage the work from beginning to end. You find the features you expect and need, like bookmarks and text enlargement. If you imagine reading the same fiction book on a desktop or laptop computer, you will probably experience a very different response and feeling.

Now, imagine reading a non-fiction work on a laptop or e-reader. How do you plan to use it? A few such works may be read from cover to cover—popular works like business best-sellers, or the *Wall Street Journal.* Mostly, though, people who read non-fiction just want to read the section that interests them most or that aligns with their learning, research or information needs. Indeed, scholarly works are often collections of essays in which the order of reading is irrelevant, and a single chapter might be all the reader desires.

You can easily imagine yourself using a chapter or two from a non-fiction work on a desktop or laptop computer, especially if you're printing important sections as well. E-readers, however, print poorly or not at all. This matters little with fiction, because we rarely desire to print fiction for future reference, but it matters greatly with non-fiction. Printing issues notwithstanding, in any e-format you can achieve some advantages, such as font size changes, citations, portability, and so on.

The usability, usefulness and user satisfaction of the e-book experience are quite different for fiction and non-fiction works.

There are some non-fiction and fiction works that straddle the line, such as Who's Who directories, biographies, autobiographies, diaries, poems, short story collections, and essays, so there isn't a hard and fast demarcation between fiction and non-fiction when it comes to e-books. As such, professional judgment will continue to be required in e-book collection development and usage scenarios.

So, when we're discussing e-books, we need to be very clear at the forefront whether we're talking about fiction or non-fiction. There isn't a black-and-white answer here, but the usability, usefulness and user satisfaction of the e-book experience are quite different for fiction and non-fiction works.

Reference Works

Too many people are calling most reference works "e-books," even though reference works are definitely not meant to be read cover to cover. Still, I think this is one place where building a reference work as an electronic resource makes sense. An electronic version doesn't replace the usefulness of the printed book entirely, but it does excel on many fronts.

For one, it frees the book from the compromises of order—alphabets, taxonomies, ontologies, spelling, chronologies, indices, etc. That's what makes these works exciting as electronic reference tools, since discovery is much simpler using search functions and advanced features like sorting and special outputs. Remember, we call these works "tools," a word that is rarely (if ever) used to describe fiction or non-fiction books. Just think of these reference works and how they are enhanced by being transformed from printed to electronic formats:

- Encyclopedias;
- Directories;
- Telephone books;
- Compilations of quotations;
- Encyclopedic biographies;
- Dictionaries;
- Almanacs;
- Company histories; and
- Citation guides.

In most usage scenarios, each type of work would be more easily and effectively used on a desktop or laptop computer with printing capability. Indeed, many electronic reference works are available in e-format only—think of Wikipedia, which alone would comprise thousands of volumes if published in paper format.

Textbooks

Textbooks are one of the more exciting arenas for e-books. Unfortunately, too many people just think about turning a traditional textbook into an e-book and placing it on the Web or making it available through an e-reader. This reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of what a textbook is and does.

Textbooks are not simple holders of content for reading or reference. When well constructed, they become the framework for the entire pedagogy of a course, a grade, a subject, or more. They tend to be developed over many years and many editions by teams of subject matter experts, with assistance from editorial and publishing talent.

Textbooks are usually tied to curricula or professional standards. They support, at the grade school level, students and schools in achieving greater success on local, regional and national standardized tests. They are designed to be taught by a teacher or professor and experienced by the learner in a scaffolded way, whereby a piece of knowledge, skill or competency is laid down in preparation for learning the next one.

In general, a textbook's author team takes into account the variety of learning styles, the target audience, and any age/stage issues when designing the textbook. These are complex environmental issues that transcend the book's format and involve the learner, system and teacher in developmental activities.

So, when we talk about e-textbooks, we shouldn't think of merely placing a current print work online or on an e-reader. If we were to not take steps to improve the learning experience and add additional features in the shift to an electronic format, we would be missing a remarkable opportunity. And that would be sad.

Other Types of e-Books

I can't neglect to mention the near book, which is indeed a book. By "near book" I mean a book, typically published in a PDF format, that comes under the rubric of government documents, statistical analyses, research reports, consulting reports, annual reports, and so on.

The days of shelving and organizing "books" by their format type are well and truly over in the digital world. End users have spoken, and they don't make the same distinctions about information formats and book types that librarians make. In the coming years, it will be exciting to see our search appliances and engines and devices display search results that show all types of articles, books and media that may be relevant to researchers' goals. That's why it's important now that we deal in a more sophisticated way in our discussion about e-books and how they work.

In the end, we can't compare apples, oranges and pineapples other than by recognizing that they are all fruit. Indeed, when we look at books through the electronic lens, we need to see that there are a wealth of differences—and a wealth of opportunities to make things better.

In my next column, I'll address a few of the other issues I mentioned here and, I hope, lay a foundation for more meaningful discussions about the role of e-books in special libraries. **SLA**

Changing the Way We Do Business

As information professionals become more active in online networking, they must balance personal interests with professional goals.

BY DEBBIE SCHACHTER, MLS, MBA

Networking begins with making connections and aims to keep them over the long term. To many people today, networking means participating in online forums for sharing information, discussing issues or socializing. For information professionals, networking encompasses all of these goals but is also an important part of career and professional development.

Today's new information professionals and library students started using social networking tools in their early years, still participate in them now, and expect to continue using them in their professional environment. Established information professionals also use online social networking services, and many associations (including SLA) offer social networking applications for use within a professional context. Many professions, including lawyers, journalists and librarians, are now using social networking as an important part of identifying sources, experts, witnesses, and more.

For some new professionals, the length of time required to realize success from traditional networking practices can be a daunting prospect. It can be years before some networking efforts actually have an impact on your professional career. For example, an early work experience can turn into a successful full-time placement in mid-life, based on connections made within the first organization.

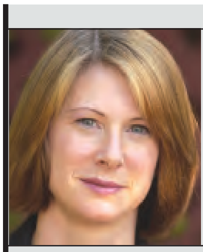
Online networking, on the other hand, has the ability to highlight an individual's ideas and quickly change perceptions of who the "experts" are in a given field. Whether that is a good or bad thing is debatable. What is clear, however, is that while the social nature of the medium is still the predominant factor, more and more business applications are being developed.

> **It is almost expected that you have an online presence and be willing to connect with other information professionals, for both personal and professional reasons.**

Making a Subtle Impact

The explosion in online networking tools and opportunities makes it easy to forget about in-person networking, but this is still an important practice in our profession. We are creatures of the physical world, and as such we rely on a number of our senses to understand information, make decisions, and more. In-person social networking allows us to make a stronger connection with others, to broaden the relationships that we establish remotely. Most people also make a more "complete" impression face to face and thus are more successful in their in-person networking endeavors.

Online networking, on the other hand, is very effective at allowing you to maintain long-term connections when in-person contact is not feasible. Information professionals have colleagues and peers spread throughout the world, and services such as LinkedIn make it easy to network within groups and with individuals. Keeping up with others' activities is easy, as the information is "pushed" to you. Opportunities for communication, such as responding to news of someone's career move or offering a peer an opportunity to work on a project



DEBBIE SCHACHTER is director of technology and collection management for the Vancouver Public Library, where she has responsibility for library systems, technical services, and collection management for a 22-branch library system. She has more than 19 years of experience in a variety of nonprofit and for-profit settings, including news, legal, and social services organizations. She can be reached at dschach@telus.net.

with you, are readily available.

The financial investments being made in social networking services are huge and are likely to remain so for some time. What is driving businesses to participate in these arenas? Increasing public use of these services is a significant factor, but more important is the opportunity to communicate with consumers in their social space. Many vendors and nonprofit organizations now clearly promote their presence on social networking sites and try to engage potential customers in conversations about their products and services.

From a professional perspective, we are still waiting to determine the extent to which social networking will alter the business landscape. Customer engagement is the first step in making a sale, so by inserting themselves into the spaces where individuals socialize, companies are subtly affecting the way we do business. The expectations we have about such things as privacy and communication between people and organizations are also undergoing fundamental shifts.

Almost an Expectation

The original premise of social networking sites has clearly evolved. From spaces where individuals could network and communicate with each other, social networking is developing into the new way to do business. Consequently, it is the norm, rather than the exception, for information professionals to be active in social networking. In fact, it is almost expected that you have an online presence and be willing to connect with other information professionals, for both personal and professional reasons.

The online community is clearly a space where we need to engage our customers and potential customers, just as other professions are doing. At the same time, we must cultivate our individual professional spaces to make and retain the connctions that we need to advance our careers and contribute to the development of the profession. Opportunities for networking, both in person and online, will continue to evolve, and it will be interesting to see how this process will affect us professionally and personally in the future. **SLA**

The Talk of the Town

I recently attended the 2010 Computers in Libraries conference and wanted to highlight some of the sites that were shared by the many distinguished presenters.

BY CAROLYN J. SOSNOWSKI, MLIS

Slidefinder

www.slidefinder.net

Many of us use Slideshare to hunt for information or post our presentations. Slidefinder is another option, and the emphasis here is on slides that are produced by university faculty and staff. Search using presentation authors and keywords, or drill down to search slide headers and even notes. Preview individual slides or download entire presentations. Currently, universities in Europe and Asia contribute most of the content to the site, although the handy language search field will target the best results for your needs.

Social Media Explorer

www.socialmediaexplorer.com

If you're moving beyond the beginning stages of social networking and want to know how to maximize your time and energy and make a real impact, visit Social Media Explorer. Jason Falls presents tips and thought pieces on using social media tools, which many organizations (unfortunately) still relegate to the sidelines.

Listorious

www.listorious.com

You probably know that you can group your tweets by creating lists on Twitter. But did you know how to find the Twitter lists of others? Through Listorious, people tag their public lists by topic so you can get find the best people to follow based on your interests. Quick and easy!

AOTUS: Collector in Chief

http://blogs.archives.gov/aotus/

This is a new blog from David Ferriero, archivist of the United States (AOTUS, a play on POTUS, acronym for the president of the United States). In his initial posts, his focus is on demonstrating his commitment to proper handling of government records—electronic records in particular. Let's watch these monumental efforts unfold and Ferriero's vision come to fruition.

Factery

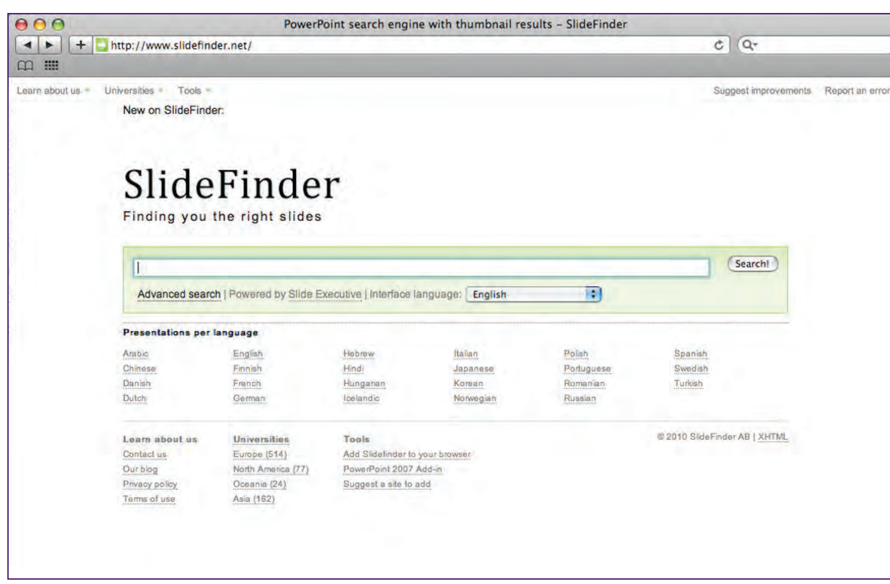
www.factery.net

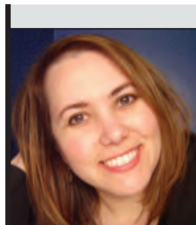
This search tool looks for statements of fact (not just word or phrase hits), and the results are the answers you are looking for instead of Web page excerpts. Factery pulls from Twitter posts as well as other Web content. Check out the trends page, too.

Fliptop

http://my.fliptop.com

Want to keep track of when a Web page is updated? There are several tools that do just that, but I hadn't heard of Fliptop. Sign up, add the toolbar button, and you'll get an e-mail whenever content is added to your chosen pages and blogs. One more way to stay current in the information explosion. **SLA**





CAROLYN SOSNOWSKI is manager of SLA's Information Center and also the association's e-learning manager. She has more than 13 years' experience in libraries, including six-plus years at SLA. She blogs at Information Center Connections (http://slaconnections.typepad.com/info_center_blog/) and can be reached at csosnowski@sla.org.

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OTHER EVENTS

MAY

1-6
PIUG 2010
Patent Information Users Group
Baltimore, Md., USA
www.piug.org/2010/an10meet.php

11-12
Enterprise Search Summit
Information Today
New York, N.Y., USA
www.enterprisesearchsummit.com/2010

21-26
MLA 2010 Annual Meeting
Medical Library Association
Washington, D.C., USA
www.mlanet.org/am/am2010/index.html

24-28
Libraries in the Digital Age
Zadar, Croatia
http://web.ffos.hr/lida/

25-27
International Conference on Digital Scholarship and Emerging Technologies
Gaborone, Botswana

25-28
2nd Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Libraries International Conference (QQML2010)
Chania, Crete, Greece
www.isast.org/

JUNE

16-18
14th International Conference on Electronic Publishing (ELPUB 2010)
Helsinki, Finland
http://conferences.aepic.it/elpub2010/

21-24
7th International Conference on Conceptions of Library and Information Science (CoLIS 7)
London, England
http://colis.soi.city.ac.uk/

24-29
2010 ALA Annual Conference
American Library Association
Washington, D.C., USA
www.ala.org/ala/conferencesevents/upcoming/annual/index.cfm

28
UK Library and Information Science Research Coalition Conference
London, England
http://lisresearch.org/

JULY

10-13
AALL Annual Meeting
American Association of Law Libraries
Denver, Colo., USA
www.aallnet.org

14-16
2010 National Diversity in Libraries Conference
Princeton, N.J., USA
https://qed.princeton.edu/main/NDLC2010

18-23
ACM SIGIR 2010
Geneva, Switzerland
www.sigir2010.org/doku.php

SEPTEMBER

1-3
ALIA Access 2010
Australian Library and Information Association
Brisbane, Australia
http://conferences.alia.org.au/access2010/

12-14
ASIDIC Fall Meeting
Association of Information and Dissemination Centers
Baltimore, Md., USA

21-22
Pharma Competitive Intelligence
Conference and Exhibition 2010
Parsippany, N.J., USA
www.pharmaciconference.com/

OCTOBER

13-15
Internet Librarian International
Information Today
London, England, UK
www.internet-librarian.com/2010/

20-22
Conference on Enterprise Information Systems (CENTERIS 2010)
University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro and the Polytechnic Institute of Cávado and Ave
Viana do Castelo, Portugal
www.eiswatch.org/centeris2010/

22-27
ASIS&T Annual Meeting
American Society for Information Science & Technology
Pittsburgh, Pa., USA
www.asis.org/conferences

25-27
Internet Librarian 2010
Information Today
Monterey, Calif., USA
www.infotoday.com/il2010/

27-30
MCN 2010 Conference
Museum Computer Network
Austin, Texas, USA
http://mcn2010.pbworks.com/

13 - 15 JUNE 2010

SLA Annual Conference
New Orleans, Louisiana

www.sla.org/neworleans2010

NOVEMBER

15-16
Taxonomy Boot Camp
Information Today
Washington, D.C., USA
www.taxonomybootcamp.com/2010/

16-18
Enterprise Search Summit
Information Today
Washington, D.C., USA
www.enterprisesearchsummit.com/fall2010/

16-18
KMWorld
Information Today
Washington, D.C., USA
www.kmworld.com/kmw2010/

28-1 December
LIANZA 2010
New Zealand Library Association
Dunedin, New Zealand
www.lianza.org.nz/events/conference2010

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- Food Science & Technology
- Environmental Engineering
- Environmental Sciences
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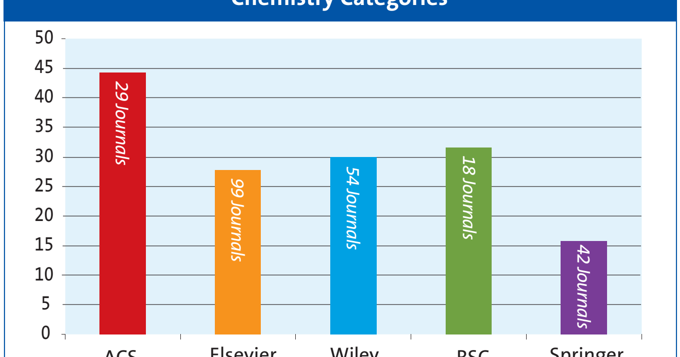
2008 Citations per Article in Thomson Reuters Seven Core Chemistry Categories



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